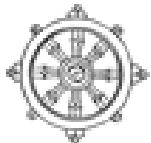






Religion/Sect/ Belief System	Origins & History	God(s) and Universe	Human Situation and Life's Purpose	Afterlife	Practices	Texts
<u>Buddhism</u> 	Founded by Siddharta Gautama (the Buddha) in c. 520 BC, NE India.	Buddha taught nothing is permanent.	Purpose is to avoid suffering and gain enlightenment and release from cycle of rebirth, or at least attain a better rebirth by gaining merit.	Reincarnation (understood differently than in Hinduism, with no surviving soul) until gain enlightenment	Meditation, mantras, devotion to deities (in some sects), mandalas (Tibetan)	Tripitaka (Pali Canon); Mahayana sutras like the Lotus Sutra; others.
<u>Christianity</u> (Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox) 	Founded by Jesus Christ in c. 30 AD, Israel.	One God who is a Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit	All have sinned and are thereby separated from God. Salvation is through faith in Christ and, for some, sacraments and good works.	Eternal heaven or hell (or temporary purgatory).	Prayer, Bible study, baptism, Eucharist (Communion), church on Sundays, numerous holidays.	The Bible (Old and New Testaments)
<u>Hinduism</u> 	Indigenous religion of India as developed to present day.	One Supreme Reality (Brahman) manifested in many gods and goddesses	Humans are in bondage to ignorance and illusion, but are able to escape. Purpose is to gain release from rebirth, or at least a better rebirth.	Reincarnation until gain enlightenment.	Yoga, meditation, worship (puja), devotion to a god or goddess, pilgrimage to holy cities, live according to one's dharma (purpose/ role).	The Vedas , Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita, Ramayana, etc.
<u>Islam</u> 	Muhammad, 622 AD, Saudi Arabia	One God (Allah in Arabic)	Humans must submit (Islam) to the will of God to gain Paradise after death.	Paradise or Hell.	Five Pillars: Faith, Prayer, Alms, Pilgrimage, Fasting. Mosque services on Fridays. Ablutions before prayer. No alcohol or pork. Holidays related to the pilgrimage and fast of Ramadan.	Qur'an (Scripture); Hadith (tradition)

Comparing World Religion Basics *You need to know about the underlined, alphabetically organized religions on this chart.*

<u>Judaism</u> 	The religion of the Hebrews (c. 1300 BC), especially after the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 AD.	One God, Yahweh (YHVH).	Obey God's commandments, live ethically. Focus is more on this life than the next.	Not historically emphasized. Beliefs vary from no afterlife to shadowy existence to the World to Come (similar to heaven).	Circumcision at birth, bar/bat mitzvah at adulthood. Synagogue services on Saturdays. No pork or other non-kosher foods. Holidays related to historical events.	Torah (Tanakh), Talmud
<u>Shinto</u>	Indigenous religion of Japan.	Polytheism based on the <i>kami</i> , ancient gods or spirits.	Humans are pure by nature and can keep away evil through purification rituals and attain good things by calling on the kami.	Death is bad and impure. Some humans become kami after death.	Worship and offerings to kami at shrines and at home. Purification rituals.	Important texts are <i>Kojiki</i> or 'Records of Ancient Matters' and <i>Nihon-gi</i> or 'Chronicles of Japan'
<u>Sikhism</u>	Guru Nanak, c. 1500 AD, Punjab, India.	One God (Ik Onkar, Nam)	Overcome the self, align life with will of God, and become a "saint soldier," fighting for good.	Reincarnation until resolve karma and merge with God.	Prayer and meditation on God's name, services at temple (gurdwara), turban and five Ks. Balance work, worship, and charity. No monasticism or asceticism.	Adi Granth (Sri Guru Granth Sahib)
<u>Mayan Religion</u>	c.250 AD (rise of the Mayan civilization)	Many gods, including Itzamná, Kukulcán, Bolon Tzacab, and Chac	Appease and nourish the gods; determine luckiest dates for various activities.	The soul journeys through dark and threatening underworld; but sacrificial victims and women who die in childbirth go to heaven.	Astronomy, divination, human sacrifice, elaborate burial for royalty, worship in stone pyramid-temples	Dresden, Madrid, and Paris codices; Books of Chilam Balam; Popol Vuh; The Ritual of the Bacabs
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